

# CARTA News

The Newsletter of the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa



## COHORTS STRONG!

245
Fellows Enrolled

157
Graduates

### **Welcome Note**

By Marta Vicente-Crespo, CARTA Program Manager



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I may not always put faces to names, especially for those who have completed most of their training virtually or before I joined CARTA. Nonetheless, I know your [fellows'] careers, I have your data, and we actively leverage this information to seek every opportunity available for you.

#### **Dear CARTA Community,**

t is a pleasure to welcome you to the July - December 2023 edition of the CARTA Newsletter. 'Ten cohorts strong' is the high note on which we are ending the year, a remarkable achievement that reflects the dedication, resilience, and collective spirit of the CARTA community.

As the Program Manager overseeing CARTA's Early Career Researchers (ECRs), I have for the last five years had the privilege of witnessing our fellows' growth, successes, and significant contributions to the health and development agenda in Africa. From winning grants, to taking on positions of responsibility at their institutions, running CARTA events, and participating in conferences, they truly embody the program's spirit. The success of our fellows beyond the program reflects the effectiveness of our unique approach, which provides a dynamic, flexible, and transformational learning environment. The sequential and timed 40-month curriculum, including the intense blended Joint Advanced Seminars and the ESE: O online academic writing course, builds critical research competencies and forges enduring networks among researchers, mentors, and peers across diverse backgrounds and disciplines.

The strength of CARTA lies not only in the dedication of our fellows but also in the collaborative efforts of our partners, both African and non-African. Our secretariat plays a crucial role in supporting day-to-day operations, ensuring smooth functioning. Together, we have created a

nurturing environment that fosters excellence and facilitates the development of the next generation of African research leaders. The recent conference held collaboratively with the University of the Witwatersrand (September 14 - 15, 2023), where many ECRs and partners were in attendance, was a celebrative example of the impact of our collective efforts.

As we work towards enrolling more cohorts, we continue to look for new ways to support our fellows in their path to research leadership. Innovations like the CARTA Evidence website allow the program to showcase the expertise and outputs of our fellows. This knowledge management platform has made it possible for them to share their expertise and contributions to science with potential collaborators and funders. The visibility enhances their prospects and capacity to influence policy and programmatic action. I encourage each fellow to update their digital profiles with us and ORCID, and claim their author profiles on Scopus and Web of Science so that we can better showcase their accomplishments and expertise, and continue connecting them with opportunities as they arise.

We look forward to a vibrant future that includes expanding our impact, empowering African scholars, strengthening research capacity, and driving positive change across the continent. Thank you for being an integral part of our journey, and here's to the next decade of shaping research excellence and leadership in Africa!

### **Nurturing Africa's Research Leaders**

### By Ann Waithaka, CARTA Communications Officer



n the vast landscape of Africa's health and development challenges, CARTA stands tall, shaping Africa's Research and Development (R&D) ecosystem. Established in 2008, CARTA has been a driving force in producing globally competitive scholars and leaders committed to addressing the continent's health issues. This is through individual and institutional capacity strengthening initiatives, including an innovative fellowship program, targeting staff of its African partner institutions.

At the heart of CARTA's mission is the recognition of the multifaceted nature of health and development challenges in sub-Saharan Africa. The ongoing battle against health issues in Africa demands a multidisciplinary and multi sectoral approach. CARTA addresses this demand by fostering a cadre of experts with the right training and orientation towards evidence generation and its effective use in policy-making, program design, and implementation.

One of CARTA's key strategies is providing doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships coupled with training and mentorship. The program has so far enrolled 245 multidisciplinary fellows and awarded over 50 graduates with postdoctoral opportunities. The approach not only supports ECRs in achieving research excellence but also ensures an intergenerational transfer of knowledge, skills, and culture. Through the latter, CARTA nurtures researchers, trainers, and leaders who can meet the research demands of the continent for accelerated development. The program's multiplier model positions CARTA as a catalyst for a culture shift in Africa's academic landscape.

CARTA is currently implementing its third strategic phase, *CARTA2025*, spanning from 2021 to 2025. The phase

continues to pursue the goal of improving public health and population well-being by ensuring that African public universities produce excellent multidisciplinary research and promote evidence uptake. *CARTA2025* goes further, fostering the establishment of research hubs to produce scientific knowledge in focused thematic areas that align with local priorities.

CARTA's impact is evident in the success stories of its fellows. With a remarkable 92% retention rate, CARTA fellows are not just passing through the program; they are becoming agents of change. The program continues to record more and more of its fellows taking on positions of responsibility in African academic institutions and influencing a shift in the research culture. By continuously producing high-quality PhD

graduates, willing and able to be partners in generating and supporting research evidence, CARTA is contributing to the continent's goal of producing 100,000 PhDs in the next ten years.

The program's success is not only measured by the number of fellows it has nurtured but also the tangible contributions to the scientific community. The establishment of the CARTA Evidence Website exemplifies the program's commitment to amplifying the visibility of African scientists. This platform collates, analyzes, synthesizes, and improves the visibility of the evidence produced by CARTA fellows, facilitating the uptake of their contributions.

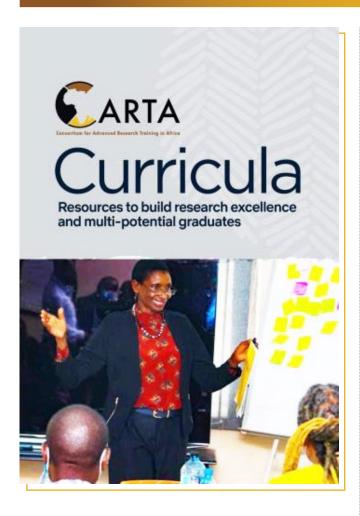
CARTA extends profound gratitude to the remarkable fellows of the program who have been instrumental in advancing public health and development discourses across Africa, as well as facilitators, trainers, experts, supervisors, mentors and institutions who have provided immense support in different ways. Their dedication and contributions exemplify the transformative impact that well-supported and nurtured scholars can have on addressing the complex challenges facing the continent.

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CARTA nurtures researchers, trainers, and leaders who can meet the research demands of the continent for accelerated development.

## Transformative Innovations in Doctoral Training: Launch of the CARTA Curricula

By Cavens Kithinji, CARTA Program Coordinator, and Florah Karimi, CARTA Program Manager



since its inception, CARTA has been a trailblazer in efforts to foster high-quality ECRs in Africa. CARTA's approach is twofold: building the research capacity of fellows, and enhancing the research environment within institutions. This dual focus seeks to strengthen institution-wide systems, creating a sustainable research ecosystem. To achieve this, CARTA has in place innovative training modules as interventions that have been used over the years, since the recruitment of its first cohort of fellows in 2011.

The first focus area entails two fellowship-related modules: PhD training module and the Graduate Grant Writing Workshop (GGWW). Referred to as the Joint Advanced Seminars (JASes), CARTA's PhD training module encompasses a multidisciplinary approach packaged into four logically sequenced seminars offered year-to-year to each cohort. The seminars are designed to enhance their skills and knowledge to guide and propel them through the research process; and provide a foundation

for building networks of researchers, peers, and mentors. On the other hand, the GGWW serves as a launch pad for CARTA graduates toward the path of research leadership. It is geared towards securing the future and fostering the career growth of its high-achieving graduates. The module is designed to build the capacity to develop a fundable research proposal, identify funding sources, and tailor proposals to them [funding sources].

The second focus area is on building the capacity necessary for African institutions to effectively support research and related training. This area also comprises two distinct modules: the Academic, Professional, and Administrative Staff (APAS) Workshop and the Supervisors Workshop. APAS is designed to cultivate a responsive culture to support research and research training among different functionaries at the institutions, including staff supporting Information Technologies (IT), libraries, laboratories, administration, and academics.

The Supervisors Workshop intervention takes recognition of the need for professionalism in PhD supervision. It is designed to build capacity for supervision processes and relations. All the appointed supervisors of CARTA fellows are invited to this workshop as they embark on the supervision journey.

CARTA's approach to adult learning acknowledges and embraces the self-directed nature inherent in the learning process for adults. Through interactive techniques such as academic posters, field visits, journal clubs, coaching, and scientific blitz, participants actively engage in the learning process. Facilitators act as guides, creating a participant-led learning environment.

CARTA has continually evolved its interventions to ensure scalability and usability by stakeholders in its eight African partner universities and beyond. This process has involved a collaborative review, refinement as well as digitization of its interventions' curricula, culminating in the launch of its digital curriculum on September 15, 2023, at the CARTA Conference in South Africa.

Accessible on the CARTA website (under teaching resources), the digital curriculum is categorized into four streams: PhD Training, Supervision, Institutional Support, and Graduate Grant Writing. These resources, available for download, include instructional videos that can be played directly on the platform or via YouTube. As CARTA marks a significant shift in doctoral training with its digitized curricula, which are poised to shape the trajectory of research leadership in Africa, institutions and individuals are invited to explore and adapt these resources.

## 6<sup>th</sup> CARTA VC's Meeting Progresses Efforts to Strengthen Research Capacity in Africa

By Ann Waithaka, CARTA Communications Officer

ollaborating with the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), CARTA convened its 6th Vice Chancellors (VCs) and Heads of Research Institutions Forum on September 13, 2023. The forum brought together leaders of partner institutions (VCs, research heads, etc.), focal persons of African and non-African partner institutions, and members of the CARTA Executive Directorate and Secretariat.

CARTA's high-level goal is to establish a vibrant African academy capable of leading world-class multidisciplinary research that is responsive to Africa's pressing development needs. This is achieved through the strengthening of doctoral training and improving the institutional capacity of African partner universities. The involvement of VCs and equivalent leaders in research institutions is crucial to

ensuring the success of these objectives.

In line with the program's commitment to strengthen doctoral training in Africa and enhance the research capacity of participating institutions, the forum focused on strategic discussions, resolutions, and reinforcing the collaborative efforts necessary to achieve CARTA's overarching goals. Specifically, participants delved into discussions on past achievements, program status, challenges faced by ECRs, and potential models of funding. Insights from these discussions led to several resolutions that will shape the future trajectory of CARTA's initiatives. The resolutions outline a strategic roadmap, emphasizing the importance of collaboration, visibility, and addressing challenges faced by researchers, as shared below.

### Resolutions



### **Visibility and Communication**

Enhance communication and awareness of CARTA and its offerings beyond the immediate circle of participants. Efforts should be intensified to promote CARTA and its resources to a wider audience.



#### Leadership Engagement

Strengthen the involvement of Deputy VCs in the mainstreaming of CARTA's initiatives. This approach ensures effective collaboration and decision-making, addressing transitional issues more efficiently.



### Collaboration with the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA)

Intensify efforts to collaborate with ARUA on activities of mutual interest. Leveraging the shared goals of both, initiatives can foster the exchange of knowledge and experiences.



### **Demonstrating Impact**

Track and highlight the multiplier effect of the CARTA program, specifically, the impact fellows are having in the institutions, including the impact of those who are supervising students at different levels.

### **Flexibility of Teaching Schedules**

Universities to consider mechanisms that incorporate more flexible teaching schedules or workload distribution to accommodate the needs of academics involved in research and training. Universities to also consider mechanisms that can enhance the practice of teacher replacement to provide academicians and ECRs with protected time for research and academic engagement.





#### **Extension of Program Benefits**

Universities to consider mechanisms that can support the extension of university benefits, such as fee waivers, to staff who are not on government contracts, but are working for the university on research projects.

### **CARTA: Worth Every African Scholar's Pursuit**

By Jean de la Croix Allen Ingabire, CARTA Fellow

ore than a mere academic pursuit, my association with the CARTA program has been a one-of-akind experience that has significantly shaped both my personal and professional trajectory. I came across the initiative and was instantly drawn to the offerings, so I applied for the fellowship. My aspirations were clear – to refine my research skills, build networks with fellow scholars, and expose myself to innovative methodologies that could enrich my academic pursuits.

The impact of CARTA on my academic and professional life has been nothing short of profound. Of great value to me as an ECR are the four distinct Joint Advanced Seminars (JASes), which are at the heart of the fellowship's training program. Meticulously crafted, JASes elevate skills and knowledge of fellows, offering a guiding force through the research process. Further, CARTA offers a unique mentoring approach where each junior fellow is paired with a senior fellow. This mentoring dynamic facilitates the exchange of experiences and wisdom, providing support to navigate the academic journey.

When I joined the CARTA fellowship in 2020, I was a Lecturer of Surgery at the University of Rwanda and an Orthopedic Surgeon at the University Teaching Hospital of Kigali. I utilized my enrollment as a pivotal factor in my promotion from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer. Subsequently, I was appointed to be a member of a research committee within the Department of Surgery at the university, where I employed the knowledge acquired from the JASes to enhance and contribute to teaching the research module.

Beyond the confines of my immediate academic environment, CARTA has been instrumental in my broader engagements. The skills and knowledge I acquired through the program in proposal development, grant writing, and leadership skills contributed to my nomination in 2021 as the Deputy Director of the NIHR Global Health Research Unit on Global Surgery in Rwanda. The tangible outcomes of my CARTA journey are reflected not just in positions and titles but also in scholarly contributions. Since becoming a CARTA fellow, I have published over 20 research papers and secured four research grants – a testament to the program's efficacy in nurturing and amplifying scholarly productivity.

As with any meaningful journey, challenges are inherent. The delicate balance between professional responsibilities and academic pursuits is often a challenge. Cognizant of this, CARTA has in place mechanisms such as the provision of protected time and teacher placement options to support fellows to navigate such challenges as best as it can. During the COVID-19 pandemic that disrupted PhD training schedule and research timelines, the program demonstrated great adaptability to unforeseen



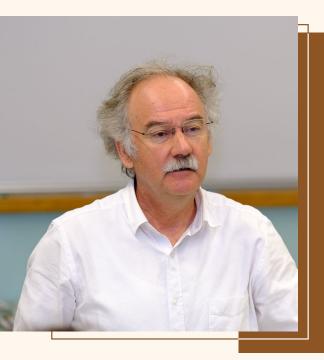
circumstances. Swift and strategic, CARTA put in place interventions to cushion and enable its fellows to remain on course. The transformation of training courses into virtual formats, the expansion of online resources, and the strengthening of ties with academic institutions demonstrate CARTA's commitment to staying abreast of contemporary challenges.

From the CARTA fellowship, I have gathered invaluable lessons and acquired a diverse skill set. The program has imparted not just technical research skills but an appreciation for quality research and an understanding of ethical research practices. The global network cultivated through CARTA has broadened my perspectives and facilitated connections that transcend geographical boundaries. These collective learnings have elevated the caliber of my research endeavors, enabling me to contribute meaningfully to academia and other spheres of influence.

In 2022, I participated in the CARTA research hub initiative, which aims to establish African-led hubs that will serve as centers of research excellence in key priority areas, and facilitate knowledge exchange and multidisciplinary collaboration. My research team was one of five selected and awarded small-scale support for the initial conceptualization of the research hubs. Our research idea seeks to 'Build Capacity in Conducting Clinical Trials to Strengthen the Rwanda Health System: Clinical Trial Unit (CTU).' Beyond participating in the competitive award, the overall process has facilitated collaboration with African and non-African partners, within and beyond CARTA. This collaboration has expanded beyond the grant, resulting in further growth and opportunities.

The future of CARTA is bright, contingent on its ability to innovate, collaborate, and adapt continually to the evolving landscape of academic research in Africa. By adhering to its fundamental principles of capacity strengthening, collaboration, and quality research training, CARTA stands poised to enhance knowledge, cultivate research excellence, and address pressing social concerns on the African continent.

## Legacy in Public Health and Academic Collaboration: A Retrospective Chat with Nino Künzli



mbarking on a journey through the career of Nino
Künzli, a distinguished Professor of Public Health
and former representative of Non-African Partners
in the CARTA Board of Management, this Q&A delves into
the pivotal moments that have shaped his trajectory. From
his late transition into research amidst environmental
crises to steering the Swiss School of Public Health, Nino's
story is a testament to his resilience and commitment to
advancing public health. In this conversation, Nino reflects
on his role in CARTA, shares insights on the program's
achievements, and offers a unique perspective on the
future of public health research in Africa.



### What are the pivotal moments that led you from a clinical career into research and public health?

My journey from a clinical career to the realms of research and public health unfolded against the backdrop of significant environmental crises in the 1980s. Witnessing these disasters prompted a decision to drift away from my clinical path and delve into environmental epidemiology and public health, forsaking the path of becoming a general practitioner. This transition required starting from scratch, as medical schools were not geared towards preparing individuals for careers in public health sciences during that time.

My inspiration came from remarkable leaders, all women, at the Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine in Basel (now an integral part of the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute or Swiss TPH), as well as experiences at the Rothman Epidemiology Summer School in Boston. Securing a fellowship from the Swiss National Science Foundation marked a turning point, enabling me to pursue a Master of Public Health (1993) and a PhD (1996) at the University of California, Berkeley – a period that stands out as a highlight in both my career and personal life.

Subsequent roles as an Associate Professor at the University of Southern California, participation in the Children's Health Study on air pollution and health, an ICREA Professorship in Barcelona (2006/09), and contributions to the emergence of the Centre of Environmental Epidemiology (CREAL, now ISGlobal) shaped my trajectory. Elected as Professor of Public Health at the University of Basel, I collaborated with Marcel Tanner (former Director of the Swiss TPH,

1997 – 2015) and with our teams, shaped what has now become Swiss TPH. At Swiss TPH, which is one of CARTA's eight Non-African Partners (NAP), I led the Department of Education and Training and oversaw PhD programs. Consequently, I joined the CARTA Board and chaired its NAP arm, which added new dimensions to my career.

Over the last eight years, I have dedicated half of my time as Dean of the Swiss School of Public Health (SSPH+), a foundation of 12 Swiss universities embracing the virtual inter-university faculty of public health sciences of Switzerland.



### Reflecting on CARTA's Journey, what are your insights on the program's approach to PhD training?

My engagement with CARTA aligned with my deepening interest in, and responsibilities for the PhD track at Swiss TPH, the University of Basel, and SSPH+. This journey provided valuable insights into innovations and effective management of inter-university PhD careers. I particularly admired the structured approach CARTA designed for the PhD level, tailored to the needs and opportunities in Africa. As we shaped PhD careers to suit local needs, incorporating elements that offer guidance and structure, CARTA's success became intertwined with the evolution of PhD tracks in our public health landscape. The program's impact is evident in the remarkable achievement of over 150 graduates and ten solid cohorts. The prospect of implementing the CARTA funding model for competitive PhD fellowship programs fills us with pride. In Switzerland, such programs are exceptionally rare, and SSPH+ stands

as one of only two Swiss entities to secure a PhD fellowship program funded by the European Union. The program supports 50 young scientists who perform cutting-edge research and are keen to become the next generation of public health leaders in both the academic and non-academic sectors. Soon, the single cohort of 50 will have graduated, but with no prospects for more such cohorts, reaching ten cohorts remains the "CARTA dream" of SSPH+!



Are there key considerations and steps taken by the CARTA NAP during your tenure to address sustainability issues and reshape the collaboration dynamics between institutions in the North and South?

During my tenure, I approached the role as representative of the CARTA NAP with a fresh perspective, benefiting from the program's rapid and successful development. Recognizing the importance of reassessing our position, the NAP engaged in discussions about the future direction, contemplating what to retain and what to adapt. One crucial realization was that the traditional model of "academic voluntarism" and informal support was no longer sustainable amid evolving academic landscapes in both Africa and the North. Looking ahead, emphasizing a more equitable distribution of responsibilities, leadership, and collaborative roles between institutions in the North and the South will foster flourishing collaborations that go beyond the more traditional "advisory role" of NAP. CARTA, being notably progressive in this aspect, has the potential to take the lead alongside the NAP in transitioning to this envisioned model. This could involve initiatives such as CARTA fellows leading collaborative North-South projects, spending time in the North to provide guidance and support to NAP institutions, and fostering a reciprocal exchange where institutions in the North send their students to CARTA for PhD programs.



In what ways do you believe CARTA has contributed to the advancement of public health research and capacity strengthening in Africa?

Undoubtedly, CARTA has played a pivotal and successful role in advancing public health research, training, and capacity building in Africa, as evidenced by numerous reports and evaluations featuring objective indicators. However, a contribution often overlooked due to its challenging quantification is the creation of ever-expanding networks of research leaders. These leaders know each other, study together, learn from each other, and build trust and lasting relationships. This is an incredibly important asset in public health sciences, where typically none of the local institutions have the critical mass needed to shape public health alone, thus, international inter-university collaborations are extremely important.



The Joint Advanced Seminars (JASes) are a key component of the CARTA Program. Are there specific instances or success points related to the JAS intervention that stand out in your memory?

The model of bringing PhD students to a central place (one of the African partner universities) for several weeks, a hallmark of the CARTA JASes, left a lasting impression on me. Witnessing the collective spirit of learning, laughter, shared challenges, and celebrations during JASes highlighted how CARTA goes beyond building individual capacity and expertise – it forges long-term bonds crucial for sustained collaborations. This experience inspired me to enhance the PhD training model at SSPH+. While replicating the extended gathering of the Swiss public health PhD landscape may not be feasible, the Inter-university Graduate Campus (IGC) now offers over 20 short courses annually. Taught by leaders from SSPH+ Foundation partners, this approach mirrors the CARTA model, providing an enriching experience for the highly international student community. It enables them to receive training in various partner universities, exposing them to diverse facets of public health.



Congratulations on your recent retirement! How do you plan to continue contributing to the field of public health, albeit in a different capacity?

As I step into this new phase, my career philosophy remains rooted in staying open to opportunities that align with my interests and expertise, avoiding over-planning. I continue overseeing two SSPH+ journals - the International Journal of Public Health (IJPH) and Public Health Reviews (PHR), and serve as the Co-Editor-in-Chief of the former. I am actively engaged in addressing the challenges posed by Open Access Journals, recognizing the difficulties they face in sustaining themselves without succumbing to the pressures of profit-driven models.



How do you recommend researchers, especially those within the CARTA program, balance academic pursuits with real-world applications?

Balancing academic pursuits with real-world applications requires a flexible approach. While the wisdom of my less-planned model remains uncertain, the success of staying open to opportunities is undeniable. Once you seize an opportunity, commit wholeheartedly, combining passion and intellect. Reading extensively about existing knowledge on the unknowns that captivate you is indispensable. For those embarking on academic public health careers, my advice is a plea to transcend mere "publishing". Public health sciences gain true significance when applied in the tangible realm of people, their environments, health systems, and policies, extending beyond crisis periods.

### **Pictorial: Celebrating Research and Innovation**

vibrant gathering, CARTA and the School of Public Health (SPH), University of the Witwatersrand, collaboratively held the Wits SPH Research Day and CARTA Conference 2023 on September 14-15, 2023 in South Africa. The two-day event commenced with the Wits SPH Research Day, featuring over 100 scientific presentations by the Wits research community and CARTA ECRs. On the second day, the CARTA conference spotlighted the program's interventions, breakthroughs, and impact, celebrating the work of the CARTA family and offering a platform to shape its future trajectory. In attendance was the Wits research community, CARTA fellows from across all ten cohorts, facilitators, focal persons, and those actively engaged in various CARTA activities across partner institutions as well as funders, research and development partners, and other stakeholders dedicated to capacity-strengthening endeavors across the continent. Explore the visual moments of innovation, collaboration, and celebration that defined the essence of the two-day engagement.



CARTA fellow, Abimbola Obimakinde of the University of Ibadan delivers an oral presentation based on her PhD research work



Catherine Kyobutungi, CARTA co-Director and Executive Director of the African Population and Health Research Center



Participants during the opening ceremony of the Wits SPH Research Day and CARTA Conference 2023



Participants at one of the poster presentations showcasing institutional interventions and innovations



CARTA graduate, Judith Mwansa of the National Institute for Communicable Diseases, and the University of the Witwatersrand, moderating session on 'Impact of CARTA: Fellow's Reflections'



Frances Griffiths, University of Warwick and Nicola Christofides, University of the Witwatersrand participating as speakers in a session on 'Innovative Approaches to Facilitation'



CARTA cohort four fellows, (L-R) - Victoria Mwakalinga, Ardhi university, Tanzania; Sunday Adedini, Federal University; Oye Ekiti, Nigeria; and Dieudonne Uwizeye and François Niragire of the University of Rwanda



Panel discussion on 'Funding and Fundraising for Research Capacity Strengthening in Africa' with (L-R) Markus Moll, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency; Evelyn Gitau, APHRC; and Alphonsus Neba, Science For Africa Foundation



Session on 'Securing the Future of Early Career Researchers' with African ECRs - Blessing Kaunda, Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (moderator - standing); (L-R) Alisha Wade, University of the Witwatersrand; Mphatso Kamndaya, Kamuzu University of Health Sciences; Grace Mbuthia, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology; and Melody Mentz-Coetzee, Peer-Learning for Emerging Researcher's Knowledge and Advancement (PERKA) Programme



Alex Ezeh, Drexel Dornsife School of Public Health, delivers keynote address on 'Divergent Demographic Experiences in the 21st Century: Implications for Africa and Other Low- and Middle-Income Countries'

### Fellows Say

nnually, CARTA hosts a Graduate Grant Writing Workshop (GGWW) that is geared towards securing the future, and fostering the career growth of its high-achieving graduates. The workshop equips post-doctoral ECRs and other researchers with skills to develop successful and substantial proposals for a personal award to support their research, a research grant or large project that they will lead. This year's GGWW, took place on October 28 - November 3, in Nairobi, Kenya, benefitting 24 CARTA graduates and two observers from Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and Accra Technical University (ATU). Both KNUST and ATU are looking to adopt the GGWW intervention. Some of the participants shared the perspectives below about the workshop.



### Jepchirchir Kiplagat Cohort 5, Moi University

Participating in the GGWW provided me with a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies involved in crafting successful grant proposals. The workshop equipped me with practical skills, from articulating clear research questions to developing a compelling narrative that effectively communicates the project's overall goal. Moreover, the interactive nature of the sessions, coupled with expert guidance, fostered a supportive learning environment, empowering me with the confidence and knowledge needed to navigate the competitive landscape of grant applications in the field of aging with HIV.

Samuel Mwaniki Cohort 8, University of Nairobi

The GGWW could not have come at a better time. The feedback I received from the reviewers helped improve my proposal, which I have since submitted for possible funding. Many thanks to CARTA for the continued support, even post-graduation.





### Felishana Cherop Cohort 7, Moi University

I am grateful to CARTA for the opportunity to participate and learn during the 2023 GGWW. It was an outstanding and exciting learning experience. Being able to develop a focused proposal and submit it for external review was a great achievement. The support from facilitators and peers was immense. I believe the training has shaped my future and prepared me for greater opportunities to develop an independent research career, and to partner and collaborate with other research experts.

### Christine Mbindyo Cohort 8, University of Nairobi

I found the GGWW extremely helpful in understanding how to correctly formulate a research question and specific research aims as well as other structure issues that are critical for successful proposal submission. With the support obtained from the workshop, I am confident I will have more winning proposals.





### Adetutu Olufemi Mayowa Cohort 7, Obafemi Awolowo University

CARTA's GGWW has helped me build critical skills needed in developing a fundable grant proposal, as well as other components often overlooked in grant writing workshops, including budget writing, community and public engagement, policy communication, and dissemination, among others. I first attended GGWW in 2022 and from the skills gained during the workshop, I collaborated with other researchers to develop a grant proposal on strengthening research ethics across two Nigerian universities, the University of Lagos and Obafemi Awolowo University. This collaborative grant, titled 'Entrenching Research Ethics, Integrity Values, and Oversight Capacity Building across Two Nigeria Universities' was funded by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.



CARTA fellows continue to excel, with 13 completing their PhDs between July - December 2023, bringing the cumulative number of graduates to 157 while 67 are still in progress. In the last six months, ten fellows have been promoted, taking on senior academic and research roles in institutions across Africa while six secured notable appointments to roles in academia, healthcare, and research institutions.

### **Graduations and Completions**



Kellen Joyce Karimi Cohort 7 University of Nairobi



Marifa Muchemwa
Cohort 10
University of the Witwatersrand



Oyewale Morakinyo Cohort 5 University of Ibadan



Olujide Olusesan Arije Cohort 9 Obafemi Awolowo University



Beryl Maritim Cohort 10 Moi University



Winnie Mutai Cohort 4 University of Nairobi



Wanagwa Manda Cohort 7 Kamuzu University of Health Sciences



Evelyne Kantarama Cohort 9 University of Rwanda

### Fellows News





Frederick Oporia Cohort 10 Makerere University



Charles Ssemugabo Cohort 9 Makerere University



James Muleme Cohort 10 Makerere University



Abimbola Obimakinde Cohort 9 University of Ibadan



Funmito Fehintola Cohort 9 Obafemi Awolowo University

### **Promotions**



Celestin Ndikumana
Cohort 5 graduate
University of Rwanda

Senior Lecturer



Macellina Ijadunola
Cohort 6 graduate

Obafemi Awolowo University

Professor



Stephen Wandera
Cohort 2 graduate,
Makerere University

Senior Lecturer



Mpho Molete
Cohort 6 graduate
University of the Witwatersrand
Research Manager and

Postgraduate Coordinator



Godwin Anywar
Cohort 6 graduate
Makerere University
Lecturer



Oyinlola Funmilola
Cohort 7 graduate
Obafemi Awolowo University

Senior Lecturer



### **Fellows News**



Melvin Ojo Agunbiade Cohort 3 graduate Obafemi Awolowo University Professor



**Judith Mwansa** Cohort 7 graduate University of the Witwatersrand

Senior Epidemiologist at the National Institute for Communicable Diseases, **South Africa** 



Olufunmilayo Banjo Cohort 3 graduate Obafemi Awolowo University

→ Associate Professor



Professor

### **Appointments**



Steven Kisaka Cohort 7 graduate **Makerere University** Appointed Director of Corporate

Services at the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) Secretariat



Sara Nieuwoudt Cohort 4 graduate University of the Witwatersrand Elected Chair of the Wits Faculty of Health Sciences Wellness Committee



Cohort 7 graduate University of Ibadan Appointed Deputy Chairperson of the Medical Advisory Committee (DCMAC), Clinical Services of the University College Hospital Ibadan, Nigeria

Olusola Olawoye



Cyril Ogada Cohort 10 fellow University of Nairobi

Appointed Reviewer of policy briefs at the university, under the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Innovation and Enterprise



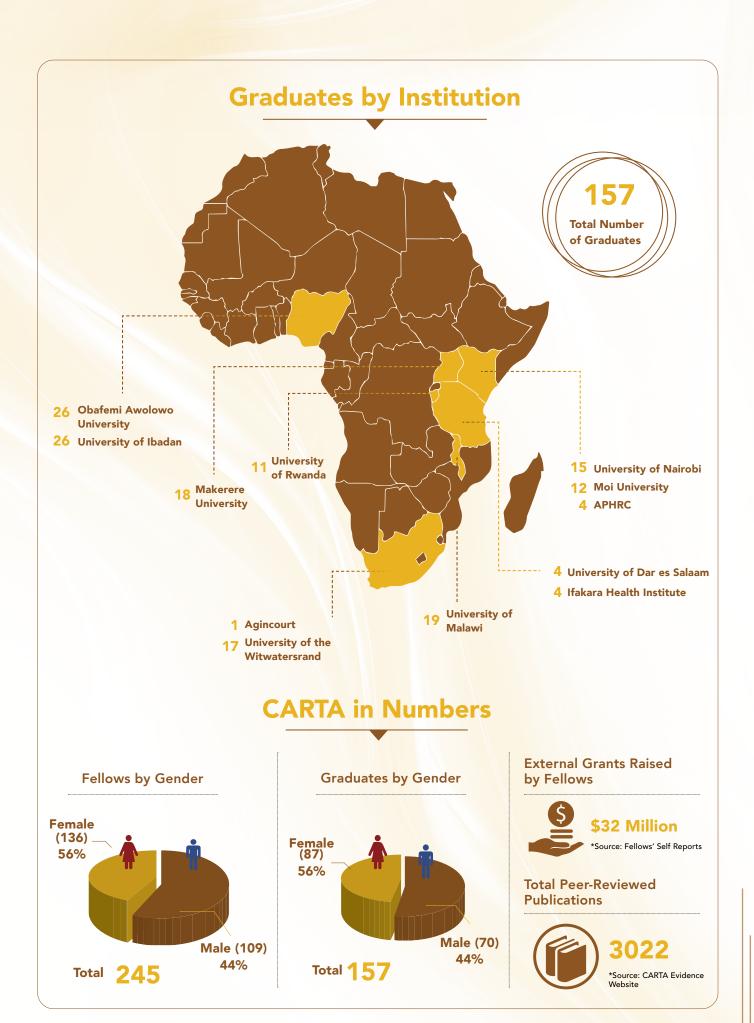
**Godwin Anywar** Cohort 6 graduate **Makerere University** 

Elected Vice Chairperson of the organizing committee to mark 100 Years of the Uganda Society and the Uganda Journal, which was held in November 2023



Nicole De Wet-Billings Cohort 1 graduate

University of the Witwatersrand Appointed Senior Director, Academic Affairs at Wits University





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### **Editorial Team**

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